

# The Commandment of Love

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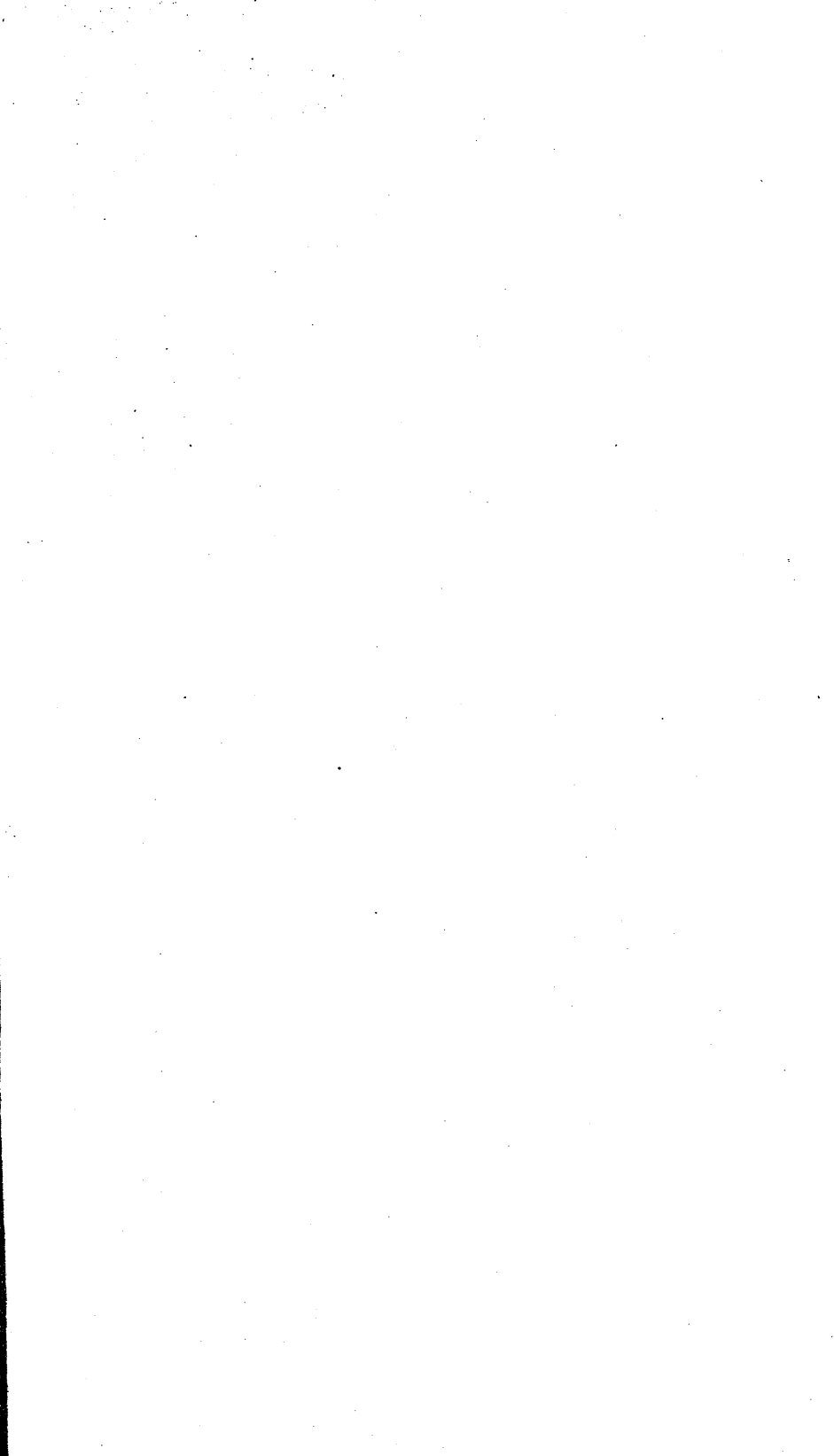






## **The Commandment of Love**









# **The Commandment of Love**

**An Essay on Eternal Life**

**By**

**Leon B. Barnett**



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**New York**

**1925**

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TO THE  
SUNNY SIDE

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Leon H. Barnett



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*To the memory of  
a great lover of humanity,*

**MY MOTHER,**

*I affectionately dedicate this book*



## **Contents**

|                                                                | <i>Page</i> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <i>Preface</i> . . . . .                                       | II          |
| <i>Introduction</i> . . . . .                                  | 17          |
| <i>The Astronomical Approach to our<br/>Problems</i> . . . . . | 23          |
| <i>The Purpose of Creation</i> . . . . .                       | 31          |
| <i>The Fate of Man</i> . . . . .                               | 37          |
| <i>Evolution Points the Way to Perfection</i> .                | 45          |
| <i>Confirmation of the Foregoing Proof</i> .                   | 53          |
| <i>Conclusion</i> . . . . .                                    | 61          |



## Preface

*There is great fear in many hearts that the study of evolution will lead to atheism.*

*One purpose of this little book is to show that science does not drive us away from God, but will, when allied with religion, draw us irresistibly towards Him, and fill us with deepest reverence.*

*Another purpose is to suggest that creation and eternal life are inseparably interwoven, that they were simultaneously conceived of by God at the foundation of the world.*

*Still another purpose is an attempt to prove by means of astronomy, evolution*





## Preface

*and the Bible that spiritual love infallibly leads to eternal life, and nothing else counts without it.*

*With such a foundation it is quite possible that all monotheistic religions could be merged into one great universal religion.*

*I herewith quote from a letter of Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick: "Your paper seems to me a very sensible and Christian piece of work, and I am glad to see you get the center of the matter where I think it belongs. I agree with you also that this Christian doctrine of love which so many people think of as pious superfluity, is really grounded in the nature of creation, and that nothing goes right without it."*

*As God is supremely wise and loving, ignorance and hate are abhorrent to Him. Let us therefore aim to free our souls of ignorance and hate, and aspire to be like*



## ***Preface***

*Him, so that "when He shall appear, we shall be like Him: for we shall see Him as He is."*

***L. H. B.***



# *The Commandment of Love*

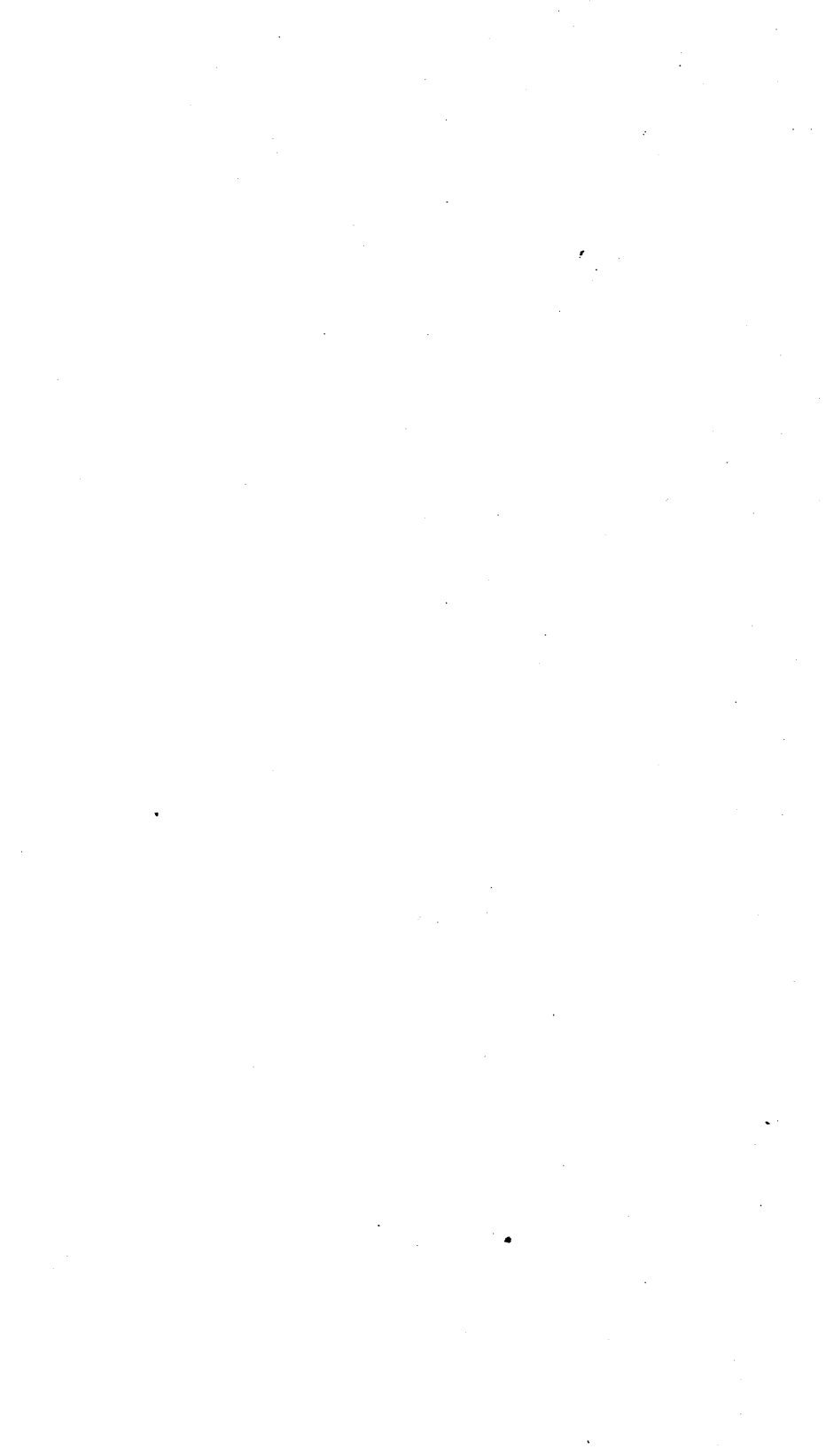
## *Introduction*

*"Up from the Earth's Center through the  
seventh Gate*

*I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn sate,  
And many a knot unravell'd by the Road;  
But not the Master-knot of Human Fate."*

*Creation and fate, the alpha and omega  
of God's divine plan, are slowly but surely  
yielding their treasured secrets. These two  
great mysteries of the ages are so closely  
allied, so inseparably connected, that if we  
can but solve the mystery of creation, we  
shall then have the answer to human fate.*

*Science and religion furnish the fun-*



## *The Commandment of Love*

*damental premises on which to build the proof, and these are: God's supreme wisdom, might, mercy and love.*

*Much has been heard of the conflict between science and religion. This conflict is the work of man and not of God, and it should cease at once, for science interprets the universe through which we receive God's direct testimony to us of His wisdom and might, while through religion we receive God's indirect testimony to us of His mercy and love. Each has its source in inspiration which is God's way of expressing His thoughts to man and thereby imparting knowledge.*

*Thousands of years ago when God saw that early man had developed sufficient intelligence, morality and receptiveness, He brought into action this divine gift of inspiration. Men of all races and nations*



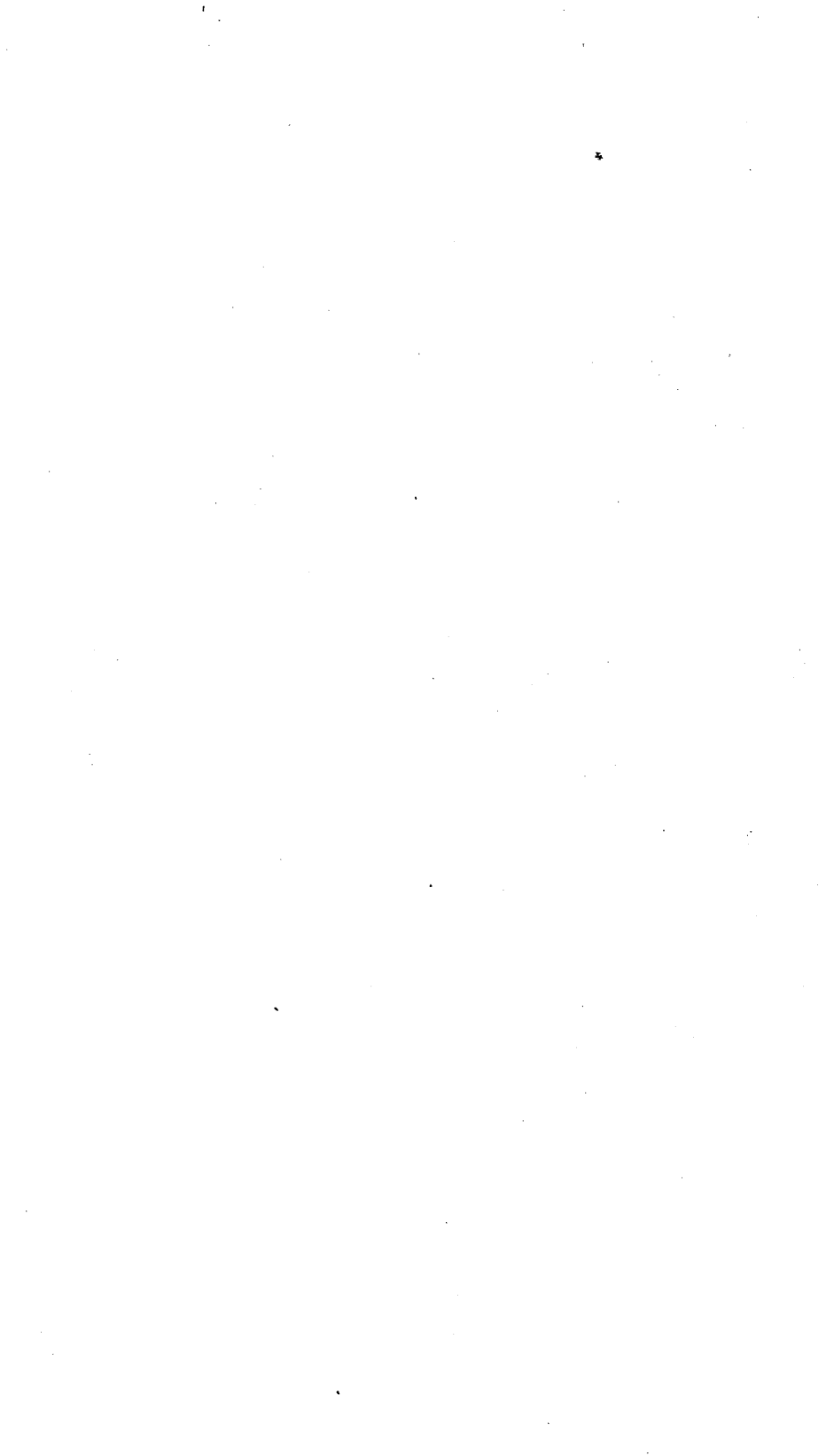


## **The Commandment of Love**

*became its recipients, but those of greatest spirituality and intelligence received it in fullest measure.*

*It is not surprising therefore that the early Hebrews, the first race to know God, should have had among their number men whom God deemed worthy to receive divine knowledge; and the result was the Bible, both Old and New Testaments.*

*But although the Bible is our greatest source of inspiration, all inspiration must not be considered as being limited to the Bible, for God may inspire anyone, at any time, and anywhere, if it fits His purpose to do so.*



## *The Astronomical Approach to our Problems*

*Our problems are far more susceptible of proof if we obtain a clear conception of the immensity and grandeur of the universe. This subject will be briefly considered and attention called to the fact that God's glory does not suffer, but indeed is enormously enhanced by the scientific conception of the universe.*

*In Genesis, Chapter I, verses 16 and 17, we find:*

*And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: He made the stars also.*



## *The Commandment of Love*

*And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth.*

*The poetry is exquisitely beautiful, but as it pictures the earth as the center of the universe and the chief beneficiary of God's attention, it gives an extremely narrow view of the immensity of space and of God's great glory.*

*The astronomical account is far more stimulating, and pictures God in a truer light.*

*The sun which was supposedly created "to give light upon the earth" by day, is a globe more than a million times the size of the earth,<sup>1</sup> while the stars which were mentioned with such indifference, "He made the stars also," are great suns, at least several hundred million in number.<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> F. R. Moulton—"An Introduction to Astronomy." The Macmillan Company, 1924.



## *The Commandment of Love*

*These huge fiery globes flying through space are so distant, that their light traveling over ten million miles every minute requires years to reach us, and in some cases hundreds of thousands of years, or even a million years.<sup>1</sup>*

*But if there are at least several hundred millions of suns in all degrees of development, then there is no reason to suppose that planets do not revolve around these suns, and if planets, then why not life?*

*God is the God of the universe as well as God of our earth, and He surely would not center all His attention upon this dot in space.*

*Just think of such a conception! Hundreds of millions of blazing suns, and perhaps a million million of them, flying*

<sup>1</sup> Harvard College Observatory, through the Associated Press, March 16, 1925.





## *The Commandment of Love*

*through space apparently in all directions, yet in reality following the wise, fixed, invariable laws of the universe; the suns without question surrounded by their families of planets, which in all likelihood are teeming with life, some perhaps of a much higher order than our own.*

*The contemplation of such vastness and power thrills us to the soul, and makes us realize as we never realized before, that God, as we now know Him, is a far mightier and wiser God than was ever dreamed of by the writers of Scripture.*



## *The Purpose of Creation*

*As we view the subject in this light, our minds revert not only to the immensity of space, but more so to the probable vast extent of life.*

*There are two outlooks which must be considered: the first picturing God as a Ruler of infinite glory; and the second picturing Him as an Inflictor of suffering. Wherever life exists, there we find suffering, and when the universe as a whole is considered with its countless generations, then the suffering must be measured in terms almost of infinity.*

*Is such a conception in harmony with that of a merciful God? Yes or no de-*



## *The Commandment of Love*

*pending on purpose. If God called all this life into being, merely to destroy it later, then we must assume that He is not merciful. But we know that that is false for it is axiomatic that God is merciful. What then was His purpose of creation, a purpose that could justify this misery and pain?*

*As we contemplate the subject, we are compelled to arrive at but one conclusion, the only one that seems possible of accounting for the suffering, the only one that apparently conforms to our fundamental premises of divine wisdom and mercy, and that is that its purpose was for the birth of souls, souls with which to people the Heavenly Kingdom, souls to act as God's companions through all eternity.*

*If this is true, then God is not lacking in love and mercy when He permits the neces-*



## ***The Commandment of Love***

*sary infliction of temporary pain for the everlasting joy that will follow in consequence.*

*This therefore is a possible explanation of God's divine plan for peopling His Kingdom, a plan which if true, is true not only for the earth but for every planet throughout the universe on which life of a high order exists, has existed, or will later exist.*





## *The Fate of Man*

*By "man" is meant any form of life possessing a soul.*

*As already stated, the problems of creation and fate are so inseparably connected, that the solution of one becomes the solution of the other.*

*An answer to the problem of creation has been suggested, and if it is true, then the answer to the problem of fate should necessarily follow, because if the birth of souls for the peopling of Heaven was the alpha of God's divine plan, then the ascension of souls into Heaven, and their becoming a part of the life thereof, must be the omega of the same divine plan. And as*



## *The Commandment of Love*

*God is merciful, then of necessity the eternal life must in the end be one of happiness.*

*Because the soul is immortal it must necessarily live on, and it is almost self-evident that it will be in precisely the same state at the beginning of our spiritual existence as it was at our last moment of earthly life. We should therefore strive to the utmost to perfect ourselves in this life. But how may we perfect ourselves here when we know not the way? We have been taught that righteousness, or certain beliefs, or love will produce perfection. But which? We are sorely perplexed, for so much depends upon a true answer, and our minds are so incapable of judging properly.*

*Fortunately God gave us eyes with which to see, and brains with which to reason and understand, and souls with which we might*



## *The Commandment of Love*

*hear His voice and feel His presence. Through knowledge we are better equipped to-day to learn the answer than ever was man before.*

*If therefore the purpose of creation was for the peopling of Heaven with perfect souls, then God must certainly desire the presence in Heaven of perfect souls, and being supremely wise, He would have evolved a plan for attaining perfection that must work with certainty everywhere.*

*The universe, as we know, contains at least several hundred million suns and probably more than a billion planets, many of them undoubtedly peopled by high orders of life. God's plans must apply to beings everywhere, and at all times, and act with absolute certainty. If a suggested plan fails to meet these requirements it must be rejected. Is it possible that God did*



## *The Commandment of Love*

*work out such a plan, a plan that would automatically guide beings of every planet throughout the universe into the one true path that leads to perfection? I believe that it is not only possible but probable that God did indeed work out such a plan, and evolution furnishes the answer.*





## *Evolution Points the Way to Perfection*

*Evolution is God's way of doing things. He builds from the bottom up, from the simple to the complex, from low to high forms of life and matter.*

*We can follow the evolution of nebulae and stars and planets. The rocks of the ages show a progressive advancement of life from lower forms. It is God's way. It is a way that spells success and hope. There is no limit to what is possible short of divinity.*

*At some time in the evolution of man a soul was born. It was a tiny spark, but*



## The Commandment of Love

*from that small beginning man's precious soul has been evolved, and it is still developing higher and higher, until at last it will be prepared to meet its God.*

*But how may we aid in this development if we do not know the way? We may be sure, however, that the way is one that is worthy of a supremely wise and merciful God, a God Whose laws are universal, a God Whose plans have remained unchanged since the foundation of the world.*

*May we believe that scriptural history is repeating itself on every planet? And if not, then how may scriptural beliefs be universal? And in like manner, how may righteousness, also based on scriptural history, be universal? But while belief and righteousness fail to meet the conditions of our problem, love does meet these conditions in a most satisfactory way.*



## *The Commandment of Love*

*God's plans being universal and evolution the basic idea thereof, we can conceive of life on every planet following the normal development from low to higher forms. The struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest are cogs in the wheel of evolution. Any process that tends to reduce waste will survive over wasteful processes.*

*It is therefore evident that if the young in any species should receive protection from the mother, the probability of survival would be far greater than if such protection had not been given. It is almost certain that in the natural order of things such a point of development must ultimately have been reached, not only on our earth, but on every planet on which high orders of life exist. And with this mothers' protection would have developed mother-love.*



## **The Commandment of Love**

*This mother-love was the origin of souls, for with mother-love go helpfulness and sacrifice. Spiritual qualities were therefore born when mother-love was born, and as life developed, so also the mental and moral natures developed, until at last reasoning, comprehending man arrived on earth, and perhaps equally high orders of life on other planets. And as the souls developed under the influence of spiritual love, so father-love developed, and brotherly love, and love of God, and all the complex spiritual qualities that go to make up the soul of man.*

*We can thus see that love is the great source of spiritual life, a source that is sure, a source in which chance can play no part, a source that is absolutely universal.*





## ***Confirmation of the Foregoing Proof***

*St. Luke, Chapter 10, Verses 25, 26, 27, 28.*

*Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*

*He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?*

*And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.*

*And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live.*

*The Commandment of Love is a commandment that embraces all other com-*



## *The Commandment of Love*

*mandments, but it does more, it goes far beyond them, for it creates spirituality in those who keep the commandment, while spirituality may be lacking in the righteous if they are without love.*

*When a man is filled with spirituality, it overflows and becomes apparent. We have all observed cases of this kind. Take the case of a missionary filled with great love for his fellow-men, undergoing hardships and suffering, and even death to relieve the misery that surrounds him, and bring comfort and happiness to others. We find men of this type everywhere, and in practically all cases they are filled with great love for their fellow-men, and spirituality shines brightly on their countenances. And then in contrast study the faces of many upright men, men in whom duty and justice outweigh mercy and love. Take the severe*



## *The Commandment of Love*

*just judge, the cold calculating banker, the intolerant ascetic priest, and is spirituality clearly apparent as in the former case? No, in fact spirituality may be entirely lacking.*

*But it must not be understood from this that devout and upright men, as a rule, are lacking in spirituality; it is only when love is lacking that this is true.*

*Belief, righteousness, and also faith are means to an end, and this end is the production of spirituality. If they accomplish this purpose they are of invaluable aid, but if they do not, then they are of but small avail.*

*The conclusion to be drawn from this is that since spirituality is but another word for soul, and as love is the one means of producing spirituality, it obviously must be the one means of perfecting the soul; and*



## ***The Commandment of Love***

*all the inspired teachings of Jesus, supplemented always by His loving service to God and man, bear testimony to the truth of this fact.*





## Conclusion

*The Commandment of Love is now coming into its own. It has always been obscured by mystic plans and miraculous acts. These ideas persisted because men were superstitious. But what in the past proved to be religion's greatest strength is now becoming its greatest weakness.*

*The Bible however must not be changed. It is too precious an inheritance, the greatest possession of the human race. But it is so flexible, so capable of new interpretations, that it can be read in the light of present day knowledge without the changing of a single word.*

*Let us hope therefore that in the future*



## ***The Commandment of Love***

*we may be more tolerant of the beliefs of others, for we may learn that "The stone which the builders refused is become the head-stone of the corner." With love as the corner-stone, it is possible that all monotheistic religions could be merged into one great universal religion.*

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